

March 13, 2018

Re: **Opposition to HB 5447**, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Auditors of Public Accounts Concerning Private Providers of Special Education

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition of HB5447, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Auditors of Public Accounts Concerning Private Providers of Special Education. I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and Clinical Director at Milestones Behavioral Services (formerly the Connecticut Center for Child Development) in Orange. I have worked with students with developmental disabilities, their families and school districts for 17 years, and have strong concerns regarding this proposed legislation. Included within this act is a requirement that sets rates for how much a private education program can charge for special education services. This was not a recommendation of the auditors, and puts our state's students with special needs in danger of losing much needed services. Private special education programs often serve populations of students who were unable to be educated in their public school settings. Services for these students are individualized, as the law states. Often times, added resources are required in order for students to learn, maintain their health, and to keep themselves and others around them safe. In order for many of these students to make progress, they require extended school hours and year-round education, higher staff-to-student ratios, individualized curriculum, direct services from professionals with expertise in particular areas (e.g. Behavior Analysts, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists), and there are many other costs associated with educating this population in an appropriate manner. Capping rates would almost certainly affect the ability of private providers to continue providing quality education and a safe environment to the populations they serve. I urge you to please vote against this act, and in doing so, vote for the rights of our special needs students to continue to receive an appropriate education.

Thank you for considering my testimony, and please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Kristine Marino-Hartmann, M.S., BCBA
Board Certified Behavior Analyst
42 Lantern View Drive, Branford, 06405
kmarino@mbs-inc.org